Thoughts for Weary Hours

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Thoughts for weary hours

THOUGHTS

FOR

WEARY HOURS.

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BIBLE HOUSE.

"To all those who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity," this Volume is affectionately dedicated.

PREFACE.

The following papers have appeared in the *Parish Visitor* during the last few years. They have been received with much favor, and their republication in book form has been frequently requested. With the hope that they may accomplish much good, they are issued in the present shape.

Thoughts for Weary Hours.

I.

GOD'S SCHOOL.

Sorrow is God's school. Even God's own Son was not made perfect without it. Though a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things he suffered. Many of the brightest virtues are like stars — there must be night, or they can not shine. Without suffering there could be no fortitude, no patience, no compassion, no sympathy. Take all sorrow out of life, and you take away all richness and depth and tenderness. Ought we to pray for sorrow, then? I do not say so, yet the Master says, "Blessed are they

that mourn;" not blessed are they that prosper. So heaven and earth differ in their judgments. With every cross some perversity or sin has been subdued, some chain unbound, some good purpose perfected. "No trial *for the present* seemeth joyous, but afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit." Have faith in this *afterward*. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. Our Father is the *God of all consolation*. Our Teacher is named the "Comforter."

II.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

When any disappointment has come upon us, and the cherished desire of our hearts—upon which all our hopes, plans, and happy anticipations have been placed—has been suddenly removed out of our reach, and we find that our Heavenly Father is leading us away from the path

of our own choosing into another which he has chosen for us, oh! how we mourn and lament, how reluctantly and rebelliously we turn our feet toward the Lord's way. It is perhaps one we shrink back from, and cry: "Not this, not this, my future path, O Lord!" Ah! how hard then to say: "Thy will, not mine, be done." We feel that the struggle is too difficult for us, and we are inclined to cast ourselves despairingly down and cry: "Who is sufficient?" But then comes the thought—no, the blessed certainty—*we are children of God;* and what then? O the promises! the promises! How they throng around the believer. Hark! they whisper to us: "Your heavenly Father knoweth your needs—He will lead you—He will guide you." "*Rest* on the Lord." "*Wait* for Him." "He will keep thee in perfect peace." "Cast your care upon Him." "Commit your way unto Him;" and all things will work together

for your good. Whom He *loveth*, He chasteneth.

III.

ENDURANCE.

The lesson of *endurance*—the best of all lessons. But how is this lesson learned? Ah! through bitter teaching, hard to be understood and obeyed, till the hand of the great Teacher is recognized clearly through it all.

IV.

A LIFE-SONG.

As God leads me will I go,
  Nor choose my way;
Let Him choose the joy or woe
  Of every day;
They can not hurt my soul,
Because in His control;
I leave to Him the whole—
  His children may.

As God leads me, I am still
  Within His hand;

Though His purpose, my self-will
Doth oft withstand.
Yet I wish that none
But His will be done,
Till the end be won,
That He hath planned.

As God leads I am content;
He will take care.
All things by His will are sent
That I must bear.
To Him I take my fear,
My wishes while I'm here;
The way will all seem clear
When I am there!

As God leads me, it is mine
To follow Him;
Soon all shall wonderfully shine,
Which now seems dim.
Fulfilled be His decree!
What He shall choose for me,
That shall my portion be,
Up to the brim!

As God leads me, so my heart
In Faith shall rest;
No grief nor fear my soul shall part
From Jesus' breast.

In sweet belief I know
What way my life doth go—
Since God permitteth so—
That must be best.

V.

"MY SOUL IS AMONG LIONS."

THERE are times of such overwhelming grief, that the soul passing through them would answer to every assurance of the possibility of peace and joy in religion: "I can not *feel it*." A person in this state becomes aware of the mystery of grief, and would look at the most powerful arguments of comfort as only so many varied proofs of her peculiar wretchedness, since they fail to comfort *her;* she would cry out in bitterness: "I *believe* in the love of God. It is as much as I can do by the greatest stretch of faith; to *feel* it is not in my power." Yet even then, when the poor soul out of the depths cries, and cries aloud as if

her Father were out of hearing—when, by the inscrutable purpose of the Almighty, we lie prostrate in darkness, ready for the enemy to insult with terrible suggestions of unbelief, even then let us take the word which God has given us, and plead with Him still. Though noways uttered except by sighs and groans, the petition of the feeblest believer will not be disregarded. He clearly discerns all our affliction and all our dismay, and is as near and mighty to save, when the *due* time of trouble is ended, as He seems to be in those calm hours of prayer, when before we have done speaking He answers, and infuses comforts more than equal to the sorrow which has but wetted the cheek and intensified the ardor of supplication.

VI.

"EVERLASTING JOY SHALL BE UPON THEIR HEADS."

Ah! whatever our secret trouble, whatever our cross, even if we anticipate it a life-long trial, still there comes this conforting thought, it is but for this life; with respect to our whole existence, when once we are proved to be faithful servants of God, how inexpressibly unimportant may be the happiness or unhappiness of our stay on earth. If we now regret that on our fifth or sixth birthday, a rainy day made it impossible to enjoy the out of doors part of our birthday amusements, we may hereafter remember with a sigh the disappointments and sorrows of this world. "O eternity! thou art very long. What is it, that a soul must a little while be sorrowful, and afterward have eternal joy?"

VII.

"TRUST IN THE LORD."

Shall I not trust my God,
Who doth so well love me?
Who as a Father cares so tenderly?
Shall I not lay the load
Which would my weakness break
On His strong hand, who never doth forsake?

He doth know all my grief
And all my heart's desire,
He'll stand by me till death, through flood and fire.
And he can send relief;
My Father's love so free,
Till the new morning shall remain to me.

Who doth the birds supply,
Who grass, and trees, and flowers,
Doth beautifully clothe, through ceaseless hours?
Who hears us ere we cry?
Can He my need forget?
Nay, though He slay me, I will trust Him yet.

When I His yoke do bear,
And seek my chiefest joy
But in His righteousness and sweet employ,
He makes my soul His care;
Early and late doth bless,
And crowneth work and purpose with success.

VIII.

THE CROOK IN THE LOT.

All have a crook in the lot, a skeleton at the feast; all have a conflict to maintain with contending duties, and perplexing difficulties, and intricate positions—with cares, strifes, and sorrows. It is the Christian only, who going forth at his own charges, can engage in the life-battle successfully. He struggles against despondency. He conquers difficulties, he rises above sorrows and disappointments, that his Father may be glorified in him to the utmost, and that by so doing he work a work of faith and patience.

IX.

"GO WORK TO-DAY."

Realize what God has given you to do *to-day*, and do not look beyond it. Strength is promised according to *your*

day, but not according to your morrow. Every-day work requires every-day grace, and every-day grace requires every-day asking. Whatever your work is, take it first to God. Before you begin, kneel and implore His blessing. Ask Him for a fresh diligent spirit. Ask Him for a spirit of patience and meekness in contending with all the little wearisome difficulties and annoyances connected with it. Ask Him to enable you not only to *bear* the daily cross, but to "take it up," denying yourself and following the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. Then put your whole might to it—the might that you have borrowed from a mightier than yourself—for that is the secret of real work. Do it as if your Master were standing before you. Do not offer to God a spirit dreaming of the great things you could do, or may do at some other time, but offer to Him your wakeful, rejoicing *present* energies.

X.

THOSE who wish to bestow the years of their life upon God, must also give Him the days, the hours, and the moments. Only think of *present* duties, the *moment's work*. Our life is given to us in *moments*, and we shall have joys for each.

XI.

WORK FOR GOD.

Is there nothing, however small, that you can do with your pen and your knowledge? Is there no little tract to be written; no simple volume which might reach some hearts, and find entrance into some homes? *Try;* see for yourselves what you can do. "She hath done what she could," is world-wide encouragement. Work for God, and not for yourself. Your work will soon find its place in the vineyard of the Lord.

XII.

God never put one man or one woman into the world, without giving each something to do in it, or for it—some visible, tangible work, to be left behind them when they die.

XIII.

Labor is worship; yea, labor for God is happiness.

XIV.

Let not one of your talents *rust* for want of use. If you have *but one*, do not bury it; let it be said of you: "*She hath done what she could.*"

XV.

THE FIGHT OF FAITH.

Holiness, the result of faith, does not enter the heart quietly and gently, though it brings joy and peace; it

causes a hard struggle, a fierce warfare with the old, unholy inhabitants of the heart. We may fully trust in an earthly friend or father, and there is none to hinder us; we may pour devoted love upon beings like ourselves, and all within the heart is in unison; but we can not confide in Him who beseeches our confidence, without contesting every inch of ground with fierce foes from within; we can not love Him who is the Lover of our souls, without heart-rivals starting up to dispute the supremacy. Where is the human heart that has not its besetting sin—its chosen idol? The idol-breaking work in each individual is as much of reality as the iconoclastic work of bygone centuries; the idols that are unseen are as real as the Juggernauts of India, and the images of Rome. Every time, however, that the Holy Spirit enables us to dethrone the usurper, to bear the suffering, to love the Loving One, to trust in the true Friend, we

are gaining ground in holiness—the chief end of the new creation—and we are working the work of God.

XVI.

CHRISTIAN COURTESY.

CULTIVATE a loving manner. How much harm is done by a *disagreeable* Christian. Oh! it is a sad thing to fold up in a napkin the talent of manner, to lose the key of the casket, to forget the *sesame* to the hearts of men.

XVII.

HOME-LIGHT.

THE sunbeam is composed of millions of minute rays; so home-light must be constituted of little tendernesses, kindly looks, sweet laughter, loving words.

XVIII.

CHEERFULNESS.

Remember when the desolate, aching void enters your heart, and casts a gloom over your face—remember that it is a comfort to others to see a cheerful spirit, a sunshiny face, a merry tongue, an even temper. Look upon the bright side of all things. Believe that the best offering you can make to God is to enjoy to the full what He sends of good, and bear what He allows of evil; like a child who, when once it thoroughly believes in its father, believes in all his dealings with it, whether it understands them or not.

XIX.

"LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH."

Oh! for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by many a foe;
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe;

That will not murmur nor complain,
Beneath the chastening rod,
But, in the hour of grief or pain,
Will lean upon its God.

A faith that shines more bright and clear,
When tempests rage without;
That, when in danger, knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

That bears unmoved, the world's dread frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That seas of trouble can not drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile.

A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last hour is fled,
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Lights up the dying-bed!

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then whate'er may come,
We'll taste, e'en here, the hallowed bliss
Of our eternal home.

XX.

"I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS."

"LIFE is full of weary days;" but these need not be comfortless, even though it is our lot to walk through it alone. Is not our eternal life already begun? Grief and inactivity belong to death. We can, indeed, suffer ourselves to be buried in the dying things of a dying world, to remain for a length of time sleeping for sorrow; but this is *not* the lot appointed to us by our Father: not this the peace to which we were called by Him who has overcome the world, and therefore bids us be of good cheer. Surely those who do not rejoice, are ill able to advance with intrepidity against those enemies of his and ours that encompass every earthly position; for how can we show forth His glory, or testify of His goodness, unless we feel

that to *us* He has been very gracious? and how can we feel this, if every day is a burden to us, to be borne wearily without use or joy?

XXI.

"SEEKEST THOU GREAT THINGS? SEEK THEM NOT.'

We need not go through the days of our life seeking for our work; God places it within our hands. Yet how often do we make the mistake of asking for a life which shall in its form and outward course be more spiritual and divine than that which we are obliged to live. We think that if we could devote ourselves entirely to what are called labors of philanthropy, to visiting the poor and sick, that would be well and worthy—and so it would be. But let me tell you that the million occasions will come, ay, and in the ordinary paths of life — in your

houses and by your firesides — wherein you may act as nobly as if all your life long you visited beds of sickness and pain. Yes, I say the *million* occasions will come, varying every hour, in which you may restrain your passions, subdue your hearts to gentleness and patience, resign your own interest for another's advantage, speak words of kindness and wisdom, raise the fallen, and cheer the fainting in spirit, and soften and assuage the bitterness and weariness of the mortal lot. These, indeed, can not be written on your tombs, but in them you may discharge offices not less glorious for yourselves than the self-denials of the far-famed Sisters of Charity, than the labors of Howard and Oberlin, or than the sufferings of the martyred host of God's elect. They shall not be written on your tombs, but they are written deep in the hearts of men — of friends, of children, of kindred all around you; they are written

in the Secret Book of the Great Account.

"We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbor and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.
The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

"Daily struggling, though inclosed and lonely,
Every day a rich reward will give;
Thou wilt find by hearty striving only,
And truly loving, thou canst truly live."

XXII.

"I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE."

Our life is an infancy and commencement of eternal life.

When we think of the eternal life which through Christ we inherit, we are too apt to regard it as a state so entirely future, that we hinder ourselves

from deriving from it the strength and peace which it could afford us while surrounded by the pettinesses of daily life.

XXIII.

"WAIT ON THE LORD."

"WAIT on the Lord." Trust in Him. "Commit thy way unto Him." All this requires great strength of grace; but if God be our God, that love which engaged Him to bind Himself to us in precious promises, will furnish us likewise with grace needful for this. He will give us the grace to wait upon Him, the strength to trust in Him and commit our way to Him. And oh! He will give us that *rest*, that unspeakable peace, which follows this perfect faith and trust. Grace and peace go together.

XXIV.

"HOPE THOU IN GOD."

"WHY art thou so disquieted, O my soul! and why art thou so cast down within me? Hope thou in God."

Why hope in God? What grounds have I for this hope and trust? Because God is your God in covenant, making Himself so to you in His choicest favors, doing that for you which none else can do, and which He doeth to none else that are not His.

Why must I wait so long in trusting?

Light is sown for the righteous; it comes not upon the sudden. We must not think to sow and reap both at once. If trouble be lengthened, lengthen thy patience.

What good will come of this?

God will wait to do you that good for which you shall praise Him. He will

deal graciously with you; he will show you His salvation. And new favors will stir you up to sing new songs.

But in the mean time, my heart is oppressed and cast down; every thing is dark to me.

God, in His own time, which is best for you, will deliver you. He will compass you about with songs of deliverance, and make it appear at last that He cares for you.

But why does it seem now as if my prayer, though offered up in earnestness and sincerity, was not heard?

God would have you follow after Him with stronger faith and prayer; He withdraws Himself, that you should be more earnest in seeking Him. God speaks sweetest comfort to the heart in the wilderness. Perhaps you are not yet humble enough, or your submission and faith are yet too weak. Your affections are not yet firmly enough fixed upon Him, and therefore it will not yet ap-

pear that it is His good will to deliver thee.

Were you a fit subject for mercy, God would bestow it on you. Persevere, therefore, in earnest, believing prayer. Seek after the spirit which prompts these words: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." "My strength and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

XXV.

A TRUST SONG.

What within me and without
  Hourly on my spirit weighs,
Burdening heart and soul with doubt,
  Darkening all my weary days?
In it I behold Thy will,
  God, who giveth rest and peace;

And my heart is calm and still,
Waiting till Thou send release.

God, Thou art my rock of strength,
And my home is in Thine arms ;
Thou wilt send me help at length,
And I feel no wild alarms.
Sin nor death can pierce the shield
Thy defense has o'er me thrown ;
Up to Thee myself I yield,
And my sorrows are Thine own.

When my trials tarry long,
Unto Thee I look and wait,
Knowing none, though keen and strong,
Can my trust in Thee abate.
And this faith I long have nursed,
Comes alone, O God ! from Thee ;
Thou my heart didst open first,
Thou didst set this hope in me.

But hast thou some darling plan
Cleaving to the things of earth ?
Leanest thou for aid on man ?
Thou wilt find him nothing worth.
Rather trust the One, alone,
Whose is endless power and love,
And the help He gives His own
Thou in very deed shalt prove.

On Thee, O my God! I rest,
Letting life float calmly on;
For I know the last is best,
When the crown of joy is won.
In Thy might all things I bear,
In Thy love find bitter sweet;
And with all my grief and care,
Sit in patience at thy feet.

O my soul! why art thou vexed?
Let things go e'en as they will;
Though to thee they seem perplexed,
Yet His order they fulfill.
Here He is thy strength and guard;
Power to harm thee here has none.
Yonder will He each reward
For the work he here has done.

Let Thy mercy's wings be spread
O'er me; keep me close to Thee.
In the peace Thy love doth shed,
Let me dwell eternally.
Be my all; in all I do,
Let me only seek Thy will.
Where the heart to Thee is true,
All is peaceful, calm, and still.

XXVI.

ATTRACTIONS OF THE CROSS.

To what did you pledge yourself, when in the days of youth you heard the voice of the Saviour calling you, and you arose and followed Him? Day by day to give up your old waking dreams—things that you have pictured out and acted over in your imagination and your hopes. To let them all go, with a saddened but willing heart. You feel as if you had fallen under some irresistible attraction, which is hurrying you into the unseen world.

Before, you only heard of the mystery; now you feel it. HE has fastened on you His look of love, even as on Peter and Mary; and you can not choose but follow: and in following Him, altogether forget both yourselves, and all your visions of life in this present world.

Lead, Saviour, lead. Amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on.
The night is dark and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet. I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step's enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on:
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on.
I loved the glare of day; and, spite off ears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blessed me; sure, it still
Will lead me on,
O'er vale and hill, through stream and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And, with the morn, those angel-faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

XXVII.

TRIALS.

An hour in our life will surely come when we shall be enabled to say that we have not had one trial too much, not one that could have been spared; and

the heart will become burdened with the sense of an awful reality, a perception of that wonderful fact that the events of life are in themselves nothing; that they are but the body destined to decay; yet that each, however trifling, bears within it the seed that is to exist for eternity; and we will feel that we can yield ourselves passively to any circumstances, whether happy or unhappy; neither wearying ourselves with regrets for the past, nor burdening ourselves with cares for the future; so only that the present moment might add its grain of faith and holiness to the treasure garnered in the hand of God against the great day of account.

XXVIII.

"WHO GIVETH SONGS IN THE NIGHT."

We think too much that external facts and circumstances govern happiness. Though strongly affecting feel-

ing, which certainly alters as circumstances alter, yet by no arrangement of circumstances can feelings be governed or insured. In all our hopes and fears, in every anticipation, we ought to think more of our Heavenly Father, who affects the spirit of man in whatever way He will, and can give us happiness or grief, without regard to causes. Did we more entirely trust the power and love of God, we might look forward to life's uncertainties with calmness, knowing that as by His will plentiful refreshment can be brought out of the most stony rock in our journey through the wilderness, so by the same will the fruitful land may be made barren, and we may be smitten with woe when all around us is smiling in unclouded prosperity.

"How can I sink with such a prop
As my eternal God,
Who bears the earth's huge pillars up,
And spreads the heavens abroad?"

XXIX.

"GROW IN GRACE."

Faith and submission, though given in answer to our prayers, are the result of a long and laborious conflict, and they are well worthy of it. God will have us labor to attain them. Adam says, in his *Private Thoughts:* "Nothing is more easy than to say the words of a prayer; but to pray hungering and thirsting is the hardest of all works." It is by being often upon our knees, by reïterating our prayers, by showing God that we feel the value of faith, and by adding to prayer the exercise of it, that we receive, in answer to a first prayer, a little faith by which we are encouraged to more fervent prayer, which will again obtain a new measure of it, that we shall attain to the free measure of faith.

To grow in faith, we have three things to do—to ask it, to exercise it, and to

contemplate examples of it in the great saints by the study of the Scriptures. And furthermore we must gather faith for the future. We must labor to-day, to have the faith we may require in five, ten, twenty years. We must gather day by day the spiritual provision, so that, surrounded by the most abundant gifts of God, we have only to open our eyes and stretch out our hands; for when the time of trouble and sorrow comes, the drooping spirit will need all this strength for the terrible struggle. Therefore, grow daily in grace, that you may have provision against the day of trouble.

XXX.

FOR PATIENCE.

Sweet Patience, come!
With long distress my spirit faints,
And my heart breaks with its complaints;
And eager Pain to find relief,
Solicits even change of grief;

And Unbelief disturbs my trust,
And shakes my hopes, as, with a gust,
Spring blossoms flutter from the stalk,
And withering lie upon the walk.
Sweet Patience, come!

Sweet Patience, come!
Not from a low and earthly source,
Waiting till things shall have their course;
Not as accepting present pain
In hope of some hereafter gain;
Not in a dull and sullen calm;
But as a breath of heavenly balm,
Bidding my weary heart submit
To bear whatever God sees fit,
Sweet Patience, come!

Sweet Patience, come!
Tell me my Father hath not shed
One grief too many on my head;
Tell me His love remembers still
His children, suffering at His will.
How excellent a thought to me
His loving-kindness then shall be!
Then, in the shadow of His wings,
I'll hide me from all troublous things.
Sweet Patience, come!

XXXI.

WORK FOR GOD.

When you awake in the morning, and when that heavy pain wakes up too, oh! so sharply! and the burden of a monotonous life falls down upon you, or rises like a dead, blank wall before you, making you turn round on your pillow longing for another night instead of an unsupportable day, rouse yourself. Remember what you are—a child of God; say, "What have I got to *do* to-day?" not, "What have I to enjoy or suffer?" but, "What have I to *do?*" Don't try to be happy, but try to work; work for God, and happiness will come.

XXXII.

A woman's work lies close under her feet. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Question it not. Philosophize not over it, but do it: only do it thoroughly and completely, be it ever so great or small.

XXXIII.

THINK NOT OF TO-MORROW.

It is a blessed attainment to live for each day, and for each day only. We have grace promised to bear present evils, but none to bear anticipated ones.

If thou foredate the day of woe,
Then thou alone must bear the blow."

"I think not of to-morrow,
Its trial or its task,
But still, with child-like spirit,
For present mercies ask.
With each returning morning,
I cast old things away;
Life's journey lies before me,
My prayer is for to-day."

XXXIV.

PEACE.

If we would have peace, we must leave our selfish wishing and planning — take our heart's desire, and lay it down at our Master's feet, saying:

"Thy will, not mine." Every disciple of Jesus has a cross to bear, a conflict to wage, a victory to strive after. What is mine? The subduing of my will to God's will. Every idol must be overthrown — every rebellious murmur stilled. The Lord must reign supreme.

XXXV.

"THY WILL BE DONE."

A GREAT and wonderful work is to be wrought in every one who will submit to be guided by Infinite Wisdom. The feeble creature is to will what God wills; to be raised from all its little perishing interests; and to seek the glory of God and the good of His creatures, (not excluding self,) as a portion of His glory. Whatever sorrow or bereavement befalls is a fresh proof that this exaltation is still designed for us. Do you reject it, and set your hearts upon a lower good? Still God is strong and

patient; still He waits to be gracious. Observe how He gently strives with our foolish propensity to go down lower. Mental pursuits, noble and good though they be, can not console you, and will not prosper, if you begin to treat them as ultimate ends. Nor will the objects of your most self-sacrificing love flourish, if you idolize them; even plans for doing good to other people will be frustrated, if every purpose and wish is not subordinated, without reserve, to the faithful service of your Master.

Nothing but perfect trust
  And love of Thy perfect will,
Can raise me out of the dust
  And bid my fears be still.

Even as now my hands,
  So doth my folded will
Lie waiting Thy commands,
  Without one anxious thrill.

But as with sudden pain
  My hands unfold and clasp,

So doth my will start up again,
And taketh its old, firm grasp.

Lord, fix mine eyes upon Thee,
And fill my heart with Thy love;
And keep my soul till the shadows flee,
And the light breaks forth above.

XXXVI.

REST IN THE LORD.

REST in the Lord. What is this? Not physical repose; no, for, however sweet, however salutary, the rest of the body is but the feeble type of that truer rest which David means when he says: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." Ah! it is a rest sweeter than sleep—deeper than death—it never ceases, never satiates. When doubt and disbelief are banished from the heart, when Faith reigns, when the object of life is found in Christ, when God becomes the sure portion and sweetest joy of the heart and the spirit within us, then is

the true rest of man—the stillness of the weary spirit in the everlasting arms. When we can look calmly and steadily on hopes fading away, expectations disappointed, plans frustrated; when we can meekly bow the head to mortification and sorrow, *because* it is the lot appointed to us by the Lord, and entirely, sincerely, yea, gladly surrender our will to our Father in heaven, then "He giveth His beloved sleep;" *then* His peace keepeth heart and mind. Yes, the peace of the holy mind is the result of self-conquest—the bringing of every thought in subjection to Christ.

How is this attained? By a long-protracted process of holy discipline; by many a weary hour of inward conflict; fainting, striving, falling, reviving, yet ever on the whole growing in conformity to the will of God. And when that glorious end is gained; when Christ gives us the victory, and self is quelled, and duty reigns supreme within the

breast; when "the immortal soul becomes consistent in self-rule," then the weary strife of frail humanity is at an end, and a repose—oh! how deep, how tranquil, how sublime!—diffuses itself through the spirit—a repose in which there is at once calmness and power, the sweet serenity of an infant's slumber, yet the strength of an angel of God.

XXXVII.

THE LIVING GOD.

Do you know what it is to exult in God as a living God? Not to think of Him as some mysterious essence, who, by an almighty fiat, impressed on matter certain general laws, and retiring into the solitude of His own being, left these to work out their own processes. But is there joy to you in the thought of God ever *nigh*, compassing your path and your lying down? Do you know of one

brighter than the brightest radiance of the visible sun, visiting your chamber with the first waking beam of the morning; an eye of infinite tenderness and compassion following you throughout the day; a hand of infinite love guiding you, shielding you from danger, and guarding you from temptation — the "Keeper of Israel," who "neither slumbers nor sleeps"?

And if gladdening it be at all times to hear the footsteps of this living God, more especially gladdening it is in the season of trial to think of Him, and to own Him in the midst of mysterious dealings, as one who personally loves you, and who chastises you because He loves you.

The world, in its cold vocabulary, in the hour of adversity, speaks of Providence, "the will of Providence, the strokes of Providence." Providence! what is that? Why dethrone a living God from the sovereignty of His own

world? Why substitute a cold, death-like abstraction in place of a living one, an acting one, and, to as many as He loves, a rebuking and chastening one? How it would take the sting from many a goading trial, thus to see, as Job did, nothing but the hand of God, and to say, like David: "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." Oh! seek to live more under the habitual thought of God's presence!

In dark passages of our earthly history, we know how supporting it is to enjoy the sympathy of kindred human friends. What must it be to have the consciousness of the presence and support and nearness of the Being of all beings? Would you weather the tempest of life, and sit calm and unmoved amid the noise of its many waters? Let your eye rest on a living God, a loving Father, a heavenly Pilot. See Him guarding the vessel of your temporal and eternal destinies! Let Faith be heard raising her

triumphant accents amid the pauses of the storm: "O Lord our God, who is a strong Lord like unto thee! Thou rulest the raging of the sea. When the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them."

Above all, be it yours to enjoy what David knew perfectly — the conscious nearness of a living Saviour, a Brother on the throne of heaven, Christ our life, God in our nature, the man Christ Jesus, susceptible of every human sympathy, capable of entering with infinite tenderness into every human want and woe, bending over us with His pitying eye, marking out for us our path, ordering our sorrows, filling or emptying our cups, providing our pastures, and making all things work together for our good. The words at this moment are as true as when, eighteen hundred years ago, they came fresh from His lips in Patmos: "I am the living One! Behold, I am alive for evermore."

XXXVIII.

"WHY ART THOU CAST DOWN?"

O Lord! I pray Thee comfort me,
In this my sore and deep distress;
And let my troubled spirit see
The wonders of Thy faithfulness!

Shine on this barren ground, that I
Lose not the fruits which should spring up;
Let me not pass Thy mercy by,
Nor miss the sweetness in my cup.

Sweetness there is. I know it, Lord;
And otherwise it can not be.
It is my Father's hand that poured
This mixture in the cup for me.

But much I fear lest my self-will,
So disappointed and so blind,
Should overlook the sweet, or spill,
And nothing but the bitter find.

What is it, Lord? Dost Thou intend
That patience should take root in me?
Is it Thy will my will to bend,
That I more like a child may be?

Is it to raise my heart above
All earthly joy and earthly pleasure,

And loose my hands from earthly love,
To fill them full of heavenly treasure?

To hinder this poor mortal-clinging,
And set my heart from earth-bonds free?
O God! my spirit art Thou bringing
Nearer to leaving all for Thee?

Whatever be Thy gracious thought,
Let me not lose its sweet design;
Since Jesus hath the blessing wrought,
Oh! for His sake, may it be mine!

Alas! my unsubmissive heart,
Believing its own aching sense,
Saith sweetness here can have no part,
Or e'en that God hath caught it thence.

Ah! Lord, my lesson lieth here!
Faith should be eyes when eyes are dim!
Say to my doubts: "Thy God is near!"
Say to my grief: "Hope thou in Him."

XXXIX.

"IN EVERY THING GIVE THANKS."

When the hour of anxiety and trial comes, lay the desire of your heart before the Lord, and wait to see what He

will do for you! Do not pine and grieve over an uncertain portion, when the best is secured to you—I mean God's grace! Be like a little child that lies on the grass and looks up at the sky. That is enough for it; and when it is hungry and cries, its mother comes and nourishes it from her breast. And so does our gracious God to us. His ways, to be sure, are wonderful, so that we can not understand them, and often think a heavy misfortune has befallen us; yet when we close our eyes and follow softly in the way He leads, we find that in the end it turns out all for our good!

I have often tormented myself with anxious cares during my whole life, and it never helped me forward; on the contrary, the very things I was most afraid of, have generally proved my best helpers when they occurred. All God's dealings with us are messengers appointed to tell us His will, if we could

but understand it. We are told in the Bible that when the angel came to the Shepherds, bringing them the best news earth ever heard, "they were sore afraid." And is it not often the same with us? But if we listen rightly, the Lord's messengers ever reply in the same words: "Fear not." And so do you be still, and let God send you what He will. When a dark thunder-cloud draws on, it looks black and terrible; but when it has passed by, the brightest rainbow is painted on it! and in like manner, every affliction looks quite different before and behind. We must remember that all things come to us back-foremost, so that we can never see them right in the face, so as to understand what they are really like, until they are gone by. Ah! never forget that heaven reaches down close, quite close to earth, so that whoever raises his head in a right manner, is sure to find himself in heaven with our gracious God and all His holy

angels, even though our blind eyes can not perceive them. And never forget also to thank God for *every thing.*

XL.

SUBMISSION.

The essence of Christianity is self-renunciation, and the discipline that brings us to feel our child-like dependence is the perfecting of our piety. Grief after grief brings us to joy. Broken in spirit we are made whole, humbled we are exalted. We gain the great victory through a succession of defeats. Presently after Saul was stopped in the city to hear the word of God, we are told "he was led up into the hill of the Lord;" so we are struck down, that we may ascend into the mount; troubled, that we may have peace; worried into the rest of our Father's arms. We sin when we chafe against the providential conditions of our lot. Submission is a

brave achievement. There is no state where you may not win acceptance, because there is none where you may not give your affections, and "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." If we are obedient in all the gentleness of faith to the voice that says, "Be still, and know that I am God," then will Christ do for us more than Samuel for Saul, showing us His word, giving us another heart and anointing and crowning the least of us, not princes and captains of armies here, but "kings and priests unto God," because servants of Himself.

XLI.

"THOU SHALT REMEMBER ALL THE WAY WHICH THE LORD THY GOD LED THEE."

Go back in memory to the days of long ago. Recall the wind tempered to the shorn lamb — the strong wave of temptation breasted—the hurtful thing

to which your soul clung removed out of your path—the right way chosen for you instead of the wrong way chosen of yourself—the measure of affliction meted out which you required—the friends selected whom your soul needed—the breathing-times granted which your tired and struggling spirit yearned for; oh! thank your God for it all! He it is who has been your guide through the waste, howling wilderness, and the brightener of all green places with His smile. Go deep into the chambers of your soul. See there the bright hope smiling, and the light shining, and the new heart struggling, and the old sins staggering and falling. Listen there to the voice which whispers all tender things of the love "unspeakable."

"When all Thy mercies, O my God!
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise."

XLII.

ACCEPTING THE CROSS.

When dejection of spirit at bitter disappointment comes upon you, do not encourage a *resentful* spirit, that vents itself in words hopelessly sad, or in confessions of a universal distrust, or in a sullen cold reserve, calling the ordering of the Almighty *fate*, or a forced hardness or indifference which has been called "philosophy." Learn the will of the Lord, meekly accept the cross He sends. You *must* be detached from every earthly object, that in the least degree separates from God; and yet you are not to turn away from these objects altogether, because they are His gifts. He smites your pleasant things and leaves you lonely in a desert land, in order that you may better hear His voice, and desire His love, and feel that He is indeed your God. Thank Him for the empti-

ness of your present life, for only thus could your hungry soul be urged to satisfy itself with things that shall endure.

XLIII.

RENEWED CONSECRATION.

This crossing of our wills must be received in an humble and docile spirit. There should be no gloomy looks, no peevish complaining. It is our Father who sends it. That name is enough for us. Remember that those who are walking the same way with us must be cheered, not discouraged. No matter how sick the heart, nor how fierce the warfare within, keep a cheerful face, have a comforting word for those around you. The very effort to do so will bring a blessing with it.

How often do I give myself to God, yield up my will to His, and as quickly take myself back again, and fall away from Him! Begin again. Give thvself

to Him afresh. Trust thyself to the power of thy Father, who has all power and might, and whose presence thou hast so often and so plainly felt, and art yet made to feel every day and hour. Trust Him wholly, and seek His righteousness; for therein is His righteousness shown, that He abideth ever with those who heartily seek Him, and make Him their end, and give themselves up to Him. In such He reigns, and all vain care falls away of itself, in those who keep thus close to God, in true self-surrender.

XLIV.

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

Ah! when we return night after night to our room — the home of our truest being, and feel too sick-hearted with daily vanities to lift up even a sigh to the Physician of our souls, what depression of spirit! what longings to escape from every surrounding! Day after

day we have prayed ere we went forth unto the world, that the thoughts of our hearts might be sanctified and our steps upheld in the narrow way, and yet how often when at night we call ourselves to account, do we have to record broken resolves, unholy thoughts, words and deeds!

At such times we shrink from prayer — it seems like a mockery of holiness. But let us not, oh! let us not deprive ourselves of the only remaining help! There is *no degree* of sin or folly that can make it wrong for us to cry out—"Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean!" He can—oh! entreat that He will, and do not for a moment doubt that He can bring us back to peace.

Can the Saviour withhold His pity, His aid, His prevailing love, from one of His flock who humbly cries to Him for succor? Even Jonah, who had not the fullness of promise granted to

us, said, after his act of direct disobedience: "I am cast out of Thy sight; yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple." We can look unto Jesus, the propitiation for our sins, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." The most sin-stricken heart may look to Him and be saved. He alone discovers by what a complete tissue of vanity, guilt, and evil influence, the devil ensnares us, and makes our weakness both the veil and the instrument of sin. He who knows all, yet loves us better than He knows, still tenderly regards our prostrate souls, and may yet find a way for their escape.

XLV.

UNRESTRAINED PRAYER.

THE comfort of unrestrained prayer is not sufficiently prized by many, even of those whose prayers are habitually persevering and true. Suppose that in the course of some uninteresting day you

come up to your own room longing for any sensation of spiritual life. Feeling none, you kneel. If you use a formula of prayer to which your lips are accustomed, it is too likely that they only will pray, and not your heart. If you truly express your *present* feeling, your heart will go with your lips. Try if it will not be so. Look back to the things which have touched you since your last praying; a slight provocation—a painful train of thought suggested by a casual remark. Try to draw out these impressions from vagueness, and represent their accompaniments of weakness and fear to Almighty God.

In the mid silence of the voiceless night,
When chased by airy dreams the slumbers flee;
Whom in the darkness doth my spirit seek,
O God! but Thee?

And if there be a weight upon my heart,
Some vague impression of the day foregone:
Scarce knowing what it is, I fly to Thee
And lay it down.

Or if it be the heaviness that comes
In token of anticipated ill—
My bosom takes no heed of what it is,
Since 'tis Thy will.

For oh! in spite of past and present care,
Or any thing beside—how joyfully
Passes that almost solitary hour,
My God, with Thee!

More tranquil than the stillness of the night,
More peaceful than the silence of that hour,
More blest than any thing, my bosom lies
Beneath Thy power.

For what is there on earth that I desire
Of all that it can give or take from me?
Or whom in heaven doth my spirit seek,
O God! but Thee?

XLVI.

THE FUTURE.

When dejectedly looking forward to the future, you are apt to think that it can not hold the happiness for which you have hoped hitherto; that it must necessarily be a wearisome continuation of

the present. Perhaps it may be so in its external features, (though that is not often likely,) but we know little of the infinite resources of Providence, and the expansive faculties of an immortal spirit, if we think that years can pass by without causing a renovation of its activity and a plentiful growth of new interests and new pleasures.

However dark and profitless, however painful and weary existence may have become; however any man, like Elijah, may be tempted to cast himself beneath the juniper tree and say, It is enough, now, O Lord! life is not done, and our Christian character is not finished, so long as God has any thing left for us to suffer, or any thing left for us to do.

XLVII.

REST AND LABOR.

Two hands upon the breast—
And labor's done
Two pale feet crossed in rest—
The race is won;

Two eyes with coin-weights shut—
And all tears cease:
Two lips where grief is mute—
Anger at peace!
So pray we oftentimes, mourning our lot:
God in His kindness answereth us not.

Two hands to work addrest
Aye for His praise;
Two feet that never rest,
Walking His ways;
Two eyes that look above,
Through all their tears;
Two lips still breathing love,
Not wrath nor fears!
So pray we afterward low on our knees;
Pardon those erring prayers! Father, hear these!

XLVIII.

WRONG THOUGHTS.

We ought to be more careful in our expenditure of thought. We all practically underrate their importance, and yet an allowed thought is the deed of the spirit. Could we see all the calamity brought on ourselves by entertaining

thoughts that are foolish and wrong, we should be more careful to keep them in a right channel. I call it a foolish thought which *consciously* reverts to an irremediable sorrow for no other purpose than self-pity. Why are we not in this respect as considerate of our own peace as we are of the peace of any other heart? By common politeness we are used to avoid subjects that are painful to our companions, when no good is to be gained by alluding to them; might we not advantageously practise the same sort of tact with ourselves, and avoid all profitless self-annoyance, all meditation on sorrowful questions which admit of no answer, but the "so be it" of sighing resignation?

XLIX.

PAST ERRORS.

It is wise to forget past errors. There is a kind of temperament which, when indulged, greatly hinders growth

in real godliness. It is that rueful, repentant, self-accusing temper which is always looking back, and microscopically observing how that which is done might have been better done. *Something* of this we *ought* to have. A Christian ought to feel always that he has partially failed, but that ought not to be the only feeling. Faith ought ever to be a sanguine, cheerful thing, and perhaps in practical life we could not give a better account of faith than by saying that it is, amid much failure, having the heart to try again. Our best deeds are marked by imperfection; but if they really were our best, we should "forget the things that are behind." We shall do better next time.

Oh! we want every thing that is hopeful and encouraging for our work: for God knows it is not an easy one. And therefore it is that the Gospel comes to the guiltiest of us all at the very outset with the inspiring news of pardon.

You remember how Christ treated sin: sin of oppression and hypocrisy indignantly, but sin of frailty — "Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." As if He would bid us think more of what we may be, than what we have been.

There was the wisdom of life in the power with which the widow of Tekoah pleaded for the restoration of Absalom from banishment from before David. Absalom had slain his brother Amnon. Well, Amnon was dead before his time, but the severity of revenge could never bring him back again. "We must all die," said the wise woman, "and are as water spilt upon the ground, which can not be gathered up again."

Christian brethren, *do not stop to weep over spilt water.* Forget your guilt, and wait to see what eternity has to say to it. You have other work to do now.

L.

DISTRUST AND INGRATITUDE.

If we lead a life of discontent and repining at our life-burdens, what will we feel when death comes, and we find that it was Mercy which loosened every tie to earth, making us glad and thankful to approach the home of pardoned spirits? How bitter will be our regrets, our self-accusations, our shame for previously mistrusting the infinite love of God! Surely the state of one who begins to trust *entirely* only because the veil is being withdrawn, will have its anguish. Have you ever felt the tide of self-reproach that sets in upon the heart when some great proof of a friend's distrusted affection has put your doubts to shame? Have you known the pang of remorse for having waited to be affectionate, grateful, and confiding till the time for showing a noble trust in your friend had quite passed by? Such keen

remorse as this, in *far* greater measure, is what I suppose we all shall feel, even after a humble Christian life, whenever the close of earthly trial brings with it the just expectation of eternal glory. How may we *then* long to have again some of our unprized, joyless days in which to prove, with warmer zeal, our love, and loyalty, and devotion to the Saviour who gives us the victory!

If your days are weary and joyless now, look on to that day which *hastens towards you*, when, if you are His, He will wipe away *all* tears; when you will *then* see that in the whole course of your pilgrimage on earth God did not do without cause, all that He has done in it. He did not cause you to shed one needless tear.

Ah! faith is weak now, but the time will come when, looking back upon the scene of our probation, we shall say, with astonishment at our past ingratitude: "What could have been done

more for us that He hath not done? How could our eternal welfare have been better secured? Pain, and sorrow, and disappointment, have done more for us than joy and happiness ever did."

LI.

"MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND."

FATHER, I know that all my life
  Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that are sure to come
  I do not fear to see;
But I ask Thee for a present mind,
  Intent on pleasing Thee.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
  Through constant watching, wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
  And to wipe the weeping eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself,
  To soothe and sympathize.

I would not have the restless will
  That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
  Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child,
  And guided where I go.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

So I ask Thee for the daily strength
To none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life
While keeping at Thy side;
Content to fill a little space,
If Thou be glorified.

And if some things I do not ask
In my cup of blessing be,
I would have my spirit filled the more
With grateful love to Thee;
More careful not to serve Thee *much*
But to please Thee *perfectly*.

There are briars besetting every path,
That call for patient care;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer;
But a lowly heart, that leans on Thee
Is happy anywhere.

In a service which Thy will appoints
There are no bonds for me,

For my inmost heart is taught *the truth*
That makes Thy children *free*,
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty.

LII.

"DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD."

By the simple intention of doing all things, whether little or great, to the Lord. And from love to Him, even the smallest things become important, and earth is turned into gold. The picking up of a straw with an intention to please God, is of greater value than the removal of mountains without such intention.

LIII.

"YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME."

There is a class of texts in Scripture which plainly teach that the privilege of personal administration to Christ was not limited to the generation that lived

in Judea eighteen centuries ago, but that whatever act of kindness and liberality you do, with a desire to please and honor Him, it is, in reality and effect, the same as if you had done it to Him personally. In describing, for instance, the awards of final judgment, our Saviour represents Himself as saying to certain persons: "I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," etc. If He had left these words without further explanation, we might in our unbelief be tempted to suppose that they were not meant for all believers to the end of time, but only to those to whom they were then addressed.

LIV.

"SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD."

Common happiness is sustained, not by great exertions which are in the power of a few, and happen scarcely

even to them, but by great numbers doing every one a little; every one something in his particular province, to his particular neighborhood. This is the way in which Providence intended society to be carried on, and benevolence to be exercised.

LV.

RETROSPECTION.

WHERE am I to-day in the course of this earthly pilgrimage? Do I go on daily in paths of holiness and peace? Can I believe myself humbler, and holier, and happier to-day than I was this time last year? Has any bud become a blossom, has any blossom turned to fruit? I can only tremble and weep as I inquire. Ah! it is not for me to say that I have advanced in holiness. It is only for me to seek to do so, to press forward.

O Lord! "I count not myself to have apprehended." Teach me to reach forth

to those things which are before me; to press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. My sinfulness is my *own* and *his* who is the enemy to all human souls. My righteousness I would not have it my own, even if that were possible. Let it be felt deeply by me that *it* is of Thee, my Saviour. Oh! bring me more and more under the guidance of that power which worketh in Thy children both to will and to do of Thy good pleasure. Every day teach me to pray for a clean heart. Our outward man requires daily washings as it becomes unclean and offensive even to ourselves, and can the inward man go on day after day without needing its daily cleansings? Oh! sanctify me, purify me, my Saviour, with Thy Holy Spirit!

"All that I was—my sin, my guilt,
My death was all my own;
All that I am, I owe to Thee,
My gracious God, alone."

LVI.

"NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE."

It is the work of a long life to become a Christian. Many, oh! many a time are we tempted to say, "I make no progress at all. 'Tis only failure after failure; nothing grows." Now look at the sea when the flood is coming in. Go and stand by the sea-beach, and you will think that the ceaseless flux and reflux is but retrogression equal to the advance. But look again in an hour's time, and the whole ocean has advanced. Every advance has been beyond the last, and every retrograde movement has been an imperceptible trifle less than the last. This is *progress* to be estimated at the end of hours, not minutes. And this is *Christian* progress. Many a fluctuation, many a backward motion, with a rush at times so vehement that all seems lost. But if the eternal work be real, every failure has been a real gain, and the next

does not carry us so far back as we were before. Every advance is a real gain, and part of it is never lost. Both when we advance and when we fail, we gain. We are nearer to God than we were. The flood of spirit-life has carried us up higher on the everlasting shores, where the waves of life beat no more, and its fluctuations end, and all is safe at last. "This is the faith and patience of the saints."

LVII.

"SLEEP ON NOW."

THERE is a day in our future lives when our time will be counted not by years, nor by months, nor yet by hours, but by minutes—the day when unmistakable symptoms shall announce that the messengers of death have come to take us. That startling moment will come which it is in vain to attempt to realize now, when it will be felt that it is all over at last—that our chance and our

trial are past. The moment that we have tried to think of, shrunk from, put away from us, here it is, going too, like all other moments that have gone before it. And then, with eyes unsealed at last, you look back on the life which is gone by.

There is no mistake about it. There it is, a sleep, a most palpable sleep—self-indulged unconsciousness of high destinies, and God, and Christ. A sleep when Christ was calling out to you to watch with Him one hour—a sleep when there was something to be done — a sleep broken, it may be, once or twice, by restless dreams, and by a voice of truth which *would* make itself heard at times, but still a sleep which was only rocked into deeper stillness by interruption. And now, from the undone eternity, the boom of whose waves is distinctly audible upon your soul, there comes the same voice again—a solemn, sad voice—but no longer the same word, "Watch:"

other words altogether—"You may go to sleep." It is too late. There is no science in earth or heaven to recall time that has once fled.

LVIII.

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE.

"He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." How much happier would Christians be, did they realize more vividly the great truths made known to them in the Gospel. Christ came to "destroy death and him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; and to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." How very seldom is death, as such, spoken of in the New Testament. The writers seem to regard it as annihilated in the case of the believer. We live here sorrounded by many mercies, but exposed to many sorrows, and conscious of much imperfection; and surely that great event in our

history which transports us to the full possession of the promised inheritance where no element of grief shall mingle in the cup of gladness; where no lingering corruption shall interfere with our obedience, and defile our worship; where no temptation shall ever demand vigilance and conflict; where no weariness shall suspend our service, but ceaseless activity shall be the rapture of repose, and where death being forever excluded, eternity will be stamped on every enjoyment. Surely the event which introduces us to such a state of being can not correctly be designated *death*. No, it is rather *life*. The dead are those who are left behind, not those who thus depart, and the moment of dissolution is the birth of the soul.

"It is not death to die,
To leave this weary road,
And 'midst the brotherhood on high,
To be at home with God."

LIX.

THE WARM HAND OF SYMPATHY.

"*He can be touched.*" Till we have reflected on it, we are scarcely aware how much the sum of human happiness in the world is indebted to this one feeling—sympathy. We get cheerfulness and vigor, we scarcely know how or when, from mere association with our fellow-men, and from the looks reflected on us of gladness and enjoyment. We catch inspiration and power to go on, from human presence and from cheerful looks. The workman works with added energy from having others by. The full family circle has a strength and a life peculiarly its own. The substantial good and the effectual relief which men extend to one is trifling. It is not by those, but by something far less costly, that the work is done. God has insured it by a much more simple machinery. He has given to the weakest and the poorest

power to contribute largely to the common stock of gladness. The child's smile and laugh are mighty powers in this world. When bereavement has left you desolate, what substantial benefit is there which makes condolence acceptable? It can not replace the loved ones you have lost. It can bestow upon you nothing permanent. But a warm hand has touched yours, and its thrill told you that there was a living response there to your emotion. One look, one human sigh, has done more for you than the costliest present could convey.

LX.

"I SHALL BE SATISFIED."

Not here! not here! not where the sparkling waters
Fade into mocking sands as we draw near,
Where in the wilderness each footstep falters,
"I shall be satisfied"—oh! not here.

Not here, where all the dreams of bliss deceive us;
Where the worn spirit never gains its goal;

Where haunted ever by the thoughts that grieve us,
Across us floods of bitter memory roll.

There is land where every pulse is thrilling
With rapture earth's sojourners may not know;
Where heaven's repose the weary heart is thrilling;
And peacefully life's time-tossed currents flow.

Far out of sight, while yet the flesh enfolds us,
Lies the fair country where our hearts abide;
And of its bliss is naught more wondrous told us,
Than these few words: "I shall be satisfied."

Satisfied! satisfied! The spirit's yearning
For sweet companionship with kindred minds,
The silent love that here meets no returning,
The inspiration which no language finds—

Shall they be satisfied? The soul's vague longing,
The aching void which nothing earthly fills?
Oh! what desires upon my soul are thronging,
As I look upward to the heavenly hills!

Thither my weak and weary steps are tending.
Saviour and Lord! with Thy frail child abide;
Guide me towards home, where, all my wandering ending,
I shall see Thee, and "*shall be satisfied!*"

LXI.

"THIS IS NOT YOUR REST."

"ARISE and depart, for this is not your rest"—it is written on every earthly thing. The moment we place our wishes and affections on things of the earth, the moment we come to consider our scheme of living satisfactory, our schedule of performances perfect, some unexpected resolution breaks in like a whirlwind to disturb this complacency, and set us into larger and perhaps plainer rooms, where we can drink in more light and gain a deeper wisdom if we will.

LXII.

A TOUCHSTONE.

WHEN the heart is really made new, and is filled with all the holy life of its Lord, it matters nothing what the outward place or scenery may be. Then there is no restless thirst for novelty, no contempt or complaint of commonplace

task-work. Then, even in the new country, the old and familiar has to be taken back. There is much in common between the *forms* of the old life and the forms of the new. The same people have to be met, and served, and endured. The same body has to be fed, clothed, exercised, and kept under. The same crosses of temper, self-disgust, baffled aspiration have to be borne. No emigration transports us out of the reach of mortal annoyance and infirmity. If the old duties look small, the old labors irksome, and the old places incapable of religious grandeur, it is probably a sign that the new heart is not really in us, but only some specious and vain imagination instead. It is rest we are seeking, then; and that rest is not here. We are breaking from *Providence*. After His high communion in the temple, Jesus, the Lord of souls, went back to Nazareth, content with the companionship of his childhood for eighteen years

more, cheerful with a village reputation, and subject to Joseph and Mary.

LXIII.

"SHALL NEVER THIRST."

On all the world's fountains, drink of them as you may, *thirst again* is written. Of the world's mountains, climb them as you may, you will never say, I have reached the coveted summit. It is enough. Men go sighing on, drinking their rivers of pleasure, and climbing their mountains of vanity. They feel, all the while, some undefined, inarticulate, nameless longing after a satisfying good; but it is a miserable travesty to say that it has been found, or can be found in any thing here. "*Who will show us any good?*" will still be the cry of the groping seeker, till he has learned to say: "*Lord, lift Thou upon me the light of Thy countenance.*"

LXIV.

"JUST AS I AM."

LET it be yours to say: Lord, I come! Thou art all I need, all I require in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, in time and through eternity. And when death is sealing my eyes, and the rush of darkness is coming over my spirit, even then will I take up the old exile strain—the great sigh of weary humanity—and blend its notes with the song of heaven: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!"

LXV.

A HEAVENLY EMBLEM.

REMEMBER, God does not say that "good work" is never to be impeded. He has never given promise in Scripture of an unclouded day, uninterrupted sunshine, a waveless, stormless sea. No; "the morning without clouds" is a

heavenly emblem. The earthly one is "a day, in which the light shall neither be clear nor dark." (Zech. 14 : 6.) But it is written : "At evening time it shall be light." The sun may wade all day through murky clouds, but he will pillow his head at night on a couch of vermilion and gold

LXVI.

"NONE OF US LIVETH UNTO HIMSELF."

No stream from its source
Flows seaward, how lonely soever its course,
But what some land is gladdened. No star ever rose
And set, without influence somewhere. Who knows
What earth needs from earth's lowest creature? No life
Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife,
And all life not be purer and stronger thereby.
The spirits of just men made perfect on high
The army of martyrs who stand by the throne
And gaze into the face that makes glorious their own,

Know this surely at last. Honest love, honest sorrow,
Honest work for the day, honest hope for the morrow,
Are these worth nothing more than the hand they make weary,
The heart they have saddened, the life they leave dreary?
Hush! the sevenfold heavens to the voice of the Spirit
Echo, "He that o'ercometh, shall all things inherit."

LXVII.

"WORK WHILE THE DAY LASTS."

THE sun sets, the autumn fades, life hastens with us all. But we stand yet in our Master's vineyard. All the days of our appointed time let us labor righteously, and wait and pray till our change comes, that we may change only from virtue to virtue, from faith to faith, and thus from glory to glory!

What have I yet to do?
Day weareth on,

Flowers, that opening new,
Smiled through the morning dew,
  Droop in the sun.

'Neath the noon's searching glare
  Fainting I stand;
Still is the sultry air,
Silentness everywhere
  Through the hot land.

Yet must I *labor* still
  All the day through,
Striving with earnest will
Patient my place to fill,
  My work to do.

Long though my task may be,
  Cometh the end,
God 'tis that helpeth me;
This is the work, and He
  New strength will lend.

He will direct my feet,
  Strengthen my hand,
Give me my portion meet.
Firm in His promise sweet,
  Trusting I stand.

Up, then, to work again!
  God's word is given,

That none shall sow in vain,
But find His ripened grain
Garnered in heaven.

Longer the shadows fall—
Night cometh on;
Low voices softly call
"Come, here is rest for all;
Labor is done."

LXVIII.

THE BELIEVER'S CHARM.

* "To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man know-

* It was an ancient custom connected with the public games, that the victor, "he that overcometh," among other honors, was presented with a white stone—*tessera*—with his name inscribed on it. Such a stone was often of two parts, each bearing a portion of the name, and was thus used as a talisman or sacred token between friends or families. None but the two parts made for each other completed the device. Each, whenever presented, in whatever part of the world, would instantly match

eth saving he that receiveth it." (Rev. 2 : 17.) He that overcometh—every victorious soul prevailing by faith and righteousness in the long and patient battle of life—shall have secret satisfactions springing up in his heart, known only between himself and his Lord.

They will not consist in outward applauses, in visible successes, in any worldly compensation whatever. The chief of them all will be the silent assurances of His personal affection, who is the purest, highest, holiest. The testimony of His friendship will be the best reward. The token of His favor will be the inestimable good.

into its place, and constitute the bearer's passport to kindness and favor with the kindred of its fellow's owner. The original cause or incidents of the alliance, were the secrets hidden by the emblem, hidden to all but the holders. And the rights of hospitality secured by this badge, seem to be the occasion of that other allusion in the same verse to the "hidden manna," thus filling out the metaphor.

So much light does advancing excellence always cast on old forms of truth—a deeper life ever illuminating even familiar oracles—that the very name of Christ shall have a new meaning. It shall be a new name. It shall have a personal charm and preciousness to each several believer. None shall know it as he knoweth it that receiveth it. No man *ever* knows the meaning of our deeper experiences, or of the words that express them, as we know them ourselves. Just as the Almighty said to the great Jewish leader and lawgiver when he declared to him His memorial name, "By that name thy fathers did not know me," though they had used that name for hundreds of years—meaning that in their less luminous state and backward education, they did not comprehend or realize what the name contained—so, to each growing nature of man, the significance of every sacred word gains depth and clearness at every

step of his way. What was dark to unbelief was bright to faith. What was perplexing to the beginner in Christian living is simple and radiant if he perseveres.

The very name of the Source and Spring of the world's only perfect spiritual illumination, Christ, has no attraction and no interest to those whose daily habit is alien from Him. But let any walk in His way, adopt His spirit, be joined to His society, and then another feeling shall invest that name, give it beauty, and open its gracious meaning, and make it a name above every name—a new name, to which every knee must bow—known only to him that receiveth it.

"O that my Saviour would impart
Some token of His love,
And comfort my desponding heart,
And make it mount above."

LXIX.

"COULD YE NOT WATCH WITH ME ONE HOUR?"

The night is dark; behold the shade was deeper
In the old garden of Gethsemane,
When that calm voice awoke the weary sleeper—
"Could'st thou not watch one hour alone with me?"

O thou so weary of thy self-denials!
And so impatient of thy little cross,
Is it so hard to bear thy daily trials,
To count all earthly things a gainful loss?

What if thou *always* suffer tribulation,
And if thy Christian warfare *never* cease;
The gaining of the greater habitation
Shall gather thee to everlasting peace.

But here we all must suffer, walking lonely
The path that Jesus once Himself hath gone;
Watch thou in patience through this hour only,
This one dark hour before the eternal dawn.

The captive oar may pause upon the galley,
The soldier sleep beneath his plumed crest,
And Peace may fold her wing o'er hill and valley,
But thou, O Christian! must not take thy rest.

Thou must walk on, however man upbraid thee,
With Him who trod the wine-press all alone;
Thou wilt not find one human hand to aid thee,
One human soul to comprehend thine own.

Heed not the images forever thronging
From out the foregone life thou liv'st no more;
Faint-hearted mariner, still art thou longing
For the dim line of the receding shore?

Wilt thou find rest of soul in thy returning
To that old path thou hast so vainly trod?
Hast thou forgotten all thy weary yearning
To walk among the children of thy God?

Faithful and steadfast in their consecration,
Living by that high faith to thee so dim,
Declaring before God their dedication,
So far from thee, because so near to Him.

Canst thou forget thy Christian superscription—
"*Behold, we count them happy which endure*"?
What treasure would'st thou in the land Egyptian,
Repass the stormy water to secure?

And wilt thou yield thy sure and glorious promise,
For the poor fleeting joys earth can afford?
No hand can take away the treasure from us
That rests within the keeping of the Lord.

Poor wandering soul, I know that thou art seeking
Some easier way, as all have sought before,
To silence the reproachful inward speaking,
Some landward path into an island shore!

The cross is heavy in thy human measure,
The way is narrow for thy inward pride,
Thou canst not lay thine intellectual treasure
At the low footstool of the Crucified.

Oh! that thy faithless soul one hour only
Would comprehend the Christian's perfect life,
Despised with Jesus, sorrowful and lonely,
Sit calmly looking upward in its strife.

For poverty and self-renunciation,
Their Father yieldeth back a thousand fold;
In the calm stillness of regeneration,
Cometh a joy they never knew of old.

In meek obedience to the heavenly Teacher
Thy weary soul can only find its peace,
Seeking no aid from any human creature,
Looking to God alone for his release.

And He will come in His own time and power,
To set His earnest-hearted children free;
Watch only through this dark and painful hour,
And the bright morning will yet break for thee.

LXX.

ALONE! YET NOT ALONE.

Each one knows that he must die alone. How few realize that, for the most part, it is God's appointment that each one should live alone and suffer alone. Each one must "bear his own burden," (Gal. 6 : 5,) feel his own incommunicable grief, which often lies like lead upon the heart.

Solitude and a sense of isolation are not peculiar to sickness. They who walk abroad in the busy world have their own "loneliness of heart," and "find it truly hard to bear."

This deep weary sense of isolation is a call to the sick to sympathize with, and better to understand, the trials of those in health. There is in every heart more or less craving for sympathy; a restless craving in those who have not learned where to turn for true sympa-

thy, and that One only and only One is *enough* to satisfy all their yearnings.

There are few who do not think it hard that their lot of woe is not more borne by others. They think it *ought* to be; they expect it; they crave for it. They cry out in their pangs that their lot is hard and peculiar; that it is not so with others. They go on crying till so loud and constant becomes their voice, that they do not, except occasionally, hear "the still small voice" which is speaking to them, and saying: "*Listen to me.*"

When they do listen, it tells them that their lot is not peculiar, but the common lot of all; that each one after his own manner (or rather that manner that God sees fitted to his character) is living alone—some more, some less so. That there is a meaning in it all; an absolute necessity. That those who do "hear the rod and who hath appointed it" then cease to be alone in their lone-

liness. That the whole end is to drive them away from creatures—from themselves, from all earthly craving—and to drive them to seek for God alone, and to dwell in Him.

The lesson is the same in all cases, but there are different ways of learning it. The path in which each man walks is untrodden by any other. He can not judge of its roughness, or how many thorns there may be in it. No one can fully see the extent and details of the trial which another is called to bear. One comes near and says words of sympathy for one part of the trial; another for some other part; a third sees no trial in it at all; a fourth thinks it must be much less trying than some other form of suffering, or than his own. No one but the sufferer sees it in all its bearings and forms of inward suffering; no one else feels the acute pain of heart, and all its throbbings. Each one leaves some disappointment behind, or else

makes the sufferer say: "I should be quite alone, or at least only very imperfectly understood, if I had my fellow-sufferers only to depend on. Each one seems wrapped in his own sorrow; his eyes too intently fixed on it to see mine, except very dimly. I must 'appeal to the world where all things are understood,' and to Him who 'weigheth the spirits.'"

The weight of life, the burden of doing, are hard to bear; still more so, perhaps, when borne in conjunction with sickness, the weary longing for work; the toilsome days which all seem spent for self, and in which you seem never to do any thing for others, but merely to add very much to their burdens; and you grow sadder and more hopeless as time goes on and brings no relief.

As each morning dawns, it seems but to open another day of selfishness. It seems to you that you *could* do something, *what* you can not exactly tell,

where to turn for work you do not know. Your friends, perhaps, think you unfit for any exertion. In their kindness, as they suppose, they do every thing for you: remove all work from you; tell you that you are not wanted; that there are plenty of people who can supply your place. They mean it in true kindness, but you do not see it so; you think that if they would only find some niche for you, you should be very thankful.

That thought of being necessary to no one is part of your weary burden. You can not truly see the love which has led your friends to speak and act thus.

Wait a little. Do not writhe; lie still. Do not say: "I am cut off from work. There is nothing left for me to do; no place to fill up." If it be so at present, it may not always be so.

Do not lose the blessing of your present state, in reaching after something either future or imaginary. Seek to find

out what are your present duties; at least, there are some. Do not ask to have your world enlarged; do your present work. You may help and be a great blessing to your attendant, even if you can not speak much. If she sees you meek and patient, submissive to your trials, bearing pain patiently, receiving the various circumstances of life cheerfully, not murmuring or repining, she may learn a lesson which may sink deep into her heart, and bring forth fruit another day.

You have relative duties, also. Perhaps you have parents, or brothers, or sisters, or children in the house with you. The mere receiving them cheerfully, making them feel that they are always welcome, that you are ever ready to bear their burdens, and to sympathize with them, to share their joys as well as their sorrows, may make your sick-room the "place of blessing" to all the household.

In this busy, bustling world, many

"seek some place of refreshment," where they may leave behind them the jarring of this life, and draw nearer to reality. Do not then say that you have no work, but lie still, and let Him "work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." Ask Him to make you so like unto Himself, that others may "take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus." Seek to comfort others with "the comfort wherewith you are comforted of God." You have a great work to do, to "deny yourself and worldly lusts," and to "walk humbly with God." This work is "laudable, glorious, and honorable." Do not despise it, lest in so doing you be "found replying against God;" lest you tempt Him to withdraw it from you.

Besides, even if it were true that you have nothing to do—no outward *work*—you have one stone at least in the temple to polish and keep in its place. This time is given you in which to do it. Look on it as a time of preparation for

something, although you know not for what: it may be for life, or it may be for death. Do not pass it by; do not waste it in murmuring, or by crying out for some change. He who sees your heart knows that it *is very* trying to you, and He is very "pitiful and of tender mercy;" but He sees that you need just this very discipline, and He will give you no other, until this has done the work for which He sent it.

Never forget that all your circumstances, even the most minute, are in the hands of God. Look at them only in this way, and not on each circumstance as an accident which may be removed. Receive it as your present lot — as the expression of the will of God toward you; and then you will find that as it is His "yoke," He will make His yoke easy and His burden light, "if it is borne in His name and for His sake."

If any other lot would have been equally good for you, if any other disci-

pline would have taught you as much of the evil of your own heart, or of the love of God, depend upon it He would have "given you the lighter, and kept back the heavier." Do not argue with the Tempter. Do not let him persuade you that they are bad circumstances, unsuited to you; but say at once: "Get thee behind me, Satan. God placed me here. It is His will. God is love." This answer will serve for every lot in life, for every trial.

LXXI.

WISDOM OF THE DIVINE ECONOMY

"ALL things work together for good to them that love God." This is a truth of the sweetest and holiest import, and is daily recurring to me; for how many are the things in common life which, in the dictates of our own poor wisdom, we would gladly have otherwise!

I doubt not you have learned, to a

great extent, to depend on God day by day for your daily bread. This lesson I desire to learn. How sweet it is to be directed from hour to hour, with scarce a ray of light beyond! The darker the future, the brighter often is faith, and the more firmly do we rely on that Arm which can never fail.

I have often found myself attempting to preserve the manna till morning, but have never succeeded. How wise is the economy of Providence and the economy of grace! How should we rejoice that we can not lay up stores for ourselves, either of wisdom or faith.

Surely it is good to commit our way wholly unto God, without fear and without compromise. Then the pillar of cloud or of fire will go before us, though we may not always be able to recognize it.

I have often said to myself that if there should come to me a permanent cause for sadness, either constitutional or other-

wise, I must just as resignedly bear it as I have carried my cheerful tendencies. Yes, be willing to be sad—nay, subdued, rather; for we can smile through tears. Let the tears come, if they must; they can not last forever. We must look sunward, and do our duty, and in God's good time we shall walk in light.

I fear I shall be ashamed of myself, when, an inhabitant of the other life, I look back upon this, and see that I was not ready and willing to bear the seeming ills I could not cure. *Only for that little time*, we shall say to ourselves, *and having the Infinite Father to hold our destiny!* "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Heaven keep us from such reproaches, when the clouds of our short pilgrimage have passed, and we see face to face the wisdom of the way by which we have been led.

LXXII.

"WE ARE SURE THOU KNOWEST ALL THINGS."

Thou knowest, Lord, the weariness and sorrow
Of the sad heart that comes to Thee for rest;
Cares of to-day, and burdens for to-morrow,
Blessings implored and sins to be confessed—
I come before Thee at Thy gracious word,
And lay them at Thy feet. Thou knowest, Lord.

Thou knowest all the past. How long and blindly
On the dark mountains the lost sheep had strayed;
How the Good Shepherd followed, and how kindly
He bore it home, upon His shoulders laid;
And healed the bleeding wounds, and soothed the pain,
And brought back life and hope and strength again.

Thou knowest all the present. Each temptation,
Each toilsome duty, each foreboding fear;
All to myself assigned of tribulation,
Or to beloved ones, than self more dear;
All pensive memories, as I journey on;
Longings for vanished smiles and voices gone.

Thou knowest all the future. Gleams of gladness,
By stormy clouds too quickly overcast;

Hours of sweet fellowship and parting sadness,
And the dark river to be crossed at last.
Oh! what could hope and confidence afford,
To tread that path, but this: Thou knowest, Lord!

Thou knowest not alone as God, all-knowing;
As man, our mortal weakness Thou hast proved;
On earth with purest sympathies o'erflowing,
O Saviour! Thou hast wept, and Thou hast loved;
And love and sorrow still to Thee may come,
And find a hiding-place, a rest, a home.

Therefore I come, Thy gentle call obeying,
And lay my sins and sorrows at Thy feet,
On everlasting strength my weakness staying,
Clothed in Thy robe of righteousness complete;
Then rising, and refreshed, I leave Thy throne,
And follow on to know as I am known.

LXXIII.

"AS MANY AS I LOVE I CHASTEN."

As many as I love!
The shadows fall upon our sunny hours;
Darkness and sorrow move
Amid our treasures, in our joy-built bowers;

Yet this sweet comfort ever may be ours—
As many as I love!

As many as I love!
To human eyes God's dealings oft seem dark;
But He would only prove
The sunlight where the cloud alone we mark;
He says—if wounded souls would only hark—
As many as I love!

As many as I love!
O burdened, sorrowing heart! this is for thee;
Thy Father's hand above
Is meting out these trials, but to be
The measure of a good thou canst not see;
As many as I love!

As many as I love!
Oh! earth's affections are but poor to this
Which reaches from above!
They—mortal frailties—change, and fade, and miss,
But this one thought gives everlasting bliss—
As many as I love!

As many as I love!
These loved ones are the bearers of the cross;
Their Christian faith to prove,
All earthly gain is counted but as loss,
When God says—clearing from the dross—
As many as I love!

As many as I love!
When life, work, pain, and waiting all are o'er,
Our earth-tied feet shall move
Up golden streets on the celestial shore;
And we shall sing with saints for evermore—
As many as I love!

LXXIV.

REST AT EVENING.

When the weariness of life is ended,
And the task of our long day is done,
And the props on which our hearts depended,
All have failed or broken, one by one;
Evening and our sorrow's shadow blended,
Telling us that peace is now begun:

How far back will seem the sun's first dawning,
And those early mists, so cold and gray!
Half forgotten e'en the toil of morning,
And the heat and burden of the day:
Flowers that we were tending, and weeds scorning,
All alike withered and cast away.

Vain will seem the impatient heart, which waited
Toils that gathered but too quickly round:
And the childish joy, so soon elated
At the path we thought none else had found;

And the foolish ardor, soon abated
By the storm which cast us to the ground.

Vain those pauses on the road, each seeming
As our final home and resting-place;
And the leaving them, while tears were streaming
Of eternal sorrow down our face,
And the hands we held, fond folly dreaming
That no future could their touch efface.

All will then be faded. Night will borrow
Stars of light to crown our perfect rest;
And the dim, vague memory of faint sorrow
Just remain to show us all was best;
Then melt into a divine to-morrow.
Oh! how poor a day to be so blest!

LXXV.

A PSALM OF LIFE.

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track.

That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved
His chastening turned me back.

That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good.

That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight.

That care and trial seem at last,
Through memory's sunset air,
Like mountain ranges over-past,
In purple distance fair.

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

"And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day."

LXXVI.

"I WILL FEAR NO EVIL."

Thy way, not mine, O Lord!
However dark it be.
Lead me by Thine own hand;
Choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be, or rough;
It will be still the best.
Winding or straight, it matters not;
It leads me to Thy rest.

I dare not choose my lot;
I would not, if I might.
Choose Thou for me, my God;
So shall I walk aright.

The kingdom that I seek
Is Thine; so let the way
That leads to it be Thine;
Else I must surely stray.

Choose Thou for me my friends,
My sickness or my health;
Choose Thou my cares for me,
My poverty or wealth.

Take Thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill,
As best to Thee may seem.
Choose Thou my good and ill.

LXXVII.

THE PEACE OF GOD.

We ask for peace, O Lord!
Thy children ask Thy peace!
Not what the world calls rest—
That toil and care should cease;
That through bright, sunny hours,
Calm life should fleet away
And tranquil night should fade
In smiling day.
It is not for such peace that we would pray.

We ask for peace, O Lord!
Yet not to stand secure,
Girt round with iron Pride,
Contented to endure:
Crushing the gentle strings
That human hearts should know,
Untouched by others' joys
Or others' woe.
Thou, O dear Lord! wilt never teach us so.

We ask Thy peace, O Lord!
Through storm, and fear, and strife,
To light and guide us on
Through a long struggling life,
While no success or gain
Shall cheer the desperate fight,
Or nerve what the world calls
Our wasted might;
Yet pressing through the darkness to the light.

It is Thine own, O Lord!
Who toil while others sleep;
Who sow with loving care
What other hands shall reap.
They lean on Thee entranced,
In calm and perfect rest.
Give us that peace, O Lord!
Divine and blest,
Thou keepest for those hearts who love Thee best.

LXXVIII.

RECONCILED.

O YEARS, gone down into the past!
What pleasant memories come to me,
Of your untroubled days of peace
And hours of almost ecstasy!

Yet would I have no moon stand still,
  Where life's most pleasant valleys lie;
Nor wheel the planet of the day
  Back on his pathway through the sky.

For though, when youthful pleasures died,
  My youth itself went with them too;
To-day, ay, even this very hour,
  Is the best hour I ever knew.

Not that my Father gives to me
  More blessings than in days gone by,
Dropping in my uplifted hands
  All things for which I blindly cry;

But that His plans and purposes
  Have grown to me less strange and dim;
And, where I can not understand,
  I trust the issues unto Him.

And, spite of many broken dreams,
  This have I truly learned to say—
Prayers, which I thought unanswered once,
  Were answered in God's own best way.

And, though some hopes I cherished once,
  Perished untimely ere their birth,
Yet I have been beloved and blest
  Beyond the measure of my worth.

And sometimes, in my hours of grief,
For moments I have come to stand
Where, in the sorrows on me laid,
I felt the chastening of God's hand.

Then learned I that the weakest ones
Are kept securest from life's harms;
And that the tender lambs alone
Are carried in the Shepherd's arms;

And sitting by the way-side, blind,
He is the nearest to the light
Who crieth out most earnestly,
"Lord, that I might receive my sight!"

O feet! grown weary as ye walk,
Where down life's hill my pathway lies,
What care I, while my soul can mount
As the young eagle mounts the skies!

O eyes! with weeping faded out,
What matters it how dim ye be?
My inner visions sweep untired
The reaches of eternity!

O death! most dreaded power of all!
When the last moment comes, and thou
Darken'st the windows of my soul,
Through which I look on nature now;

Yea, when mortality dissolves,
  Shall I not meet thine hour unawed?
My house eternal in the heavens
  Is lighted by the smile of God.

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